

Scholastic Aptitude Test

The **Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)** is required for admission to most undergraduate programs in the United States. By design, the SAT provides a standardized measure of academic performance for all examinees under equivalent conditions. The new SAT includes three sections:

1) **Critical Reasoning:** 70 minutes. 67 total questions:

Sentence Completion, 19 questions
Passage-based Reading, 48 questions

2) **Mathematics:** 70 minutes. 54 total questions:

Multiple Choice, Problem Solving, 44 questions
Student-produced Response (Grid-Ins), 10 questions

3) **Writing:** 60 minutes. 49 total questions plus essay

Identifying Sentence Errors, 18 questions
Improving Sentences, 25 questions
Improving Paragraphs, 6 questions
Essay Writing, 1 essay

Overview

Time	Content	Item Types	Score
60 min.	Grammar, usage, and word choice	Multiple choice questions (35 min.) and student-written essay (25 min.)	200-800

Short Essay

- The short essay measures your ability to:
 - Organize and express ideas clearly
 - Develop and support the main idea
 - Use appropriate word choice and sentence structure
- You'll be asked to develop a point of a view on an issue, using reasoning and evidence — based on your own experiences, readings, or observations — to support your ideas.
- The essay will be scored by trained high school and college teachers. Each reader will give the essay a score from 1 to 6 (6 is the highest score) based on the overall quality of the essay and your demonstration of writing competence.

Multiple-Choice

- The multiple-choice writing questions measure your ability to:
 - Improve sentences and paragraphs
 - Identify errors (such as diction, grammar, sentence construction, subject-verb agreement, proper word usage, and wordiness)

**The Critical Reading Section
Overview**

Time	Content	Item Types	Score
70 min. (two 25-min. sections and one 20-min. section)	Critical reading and sentence-level reading	Reading comprehension, sentence completions, and paragraph-length critical reading	200-800

The critical reading section, formerly known as the verbal section, includes short reading passages along with the existing long reading passages. Analogies have been eliminated, but sentence-completion questions and passage-based reading questions remain.

**The Mathematics Section
Overview**

Time	Content	Item Types	Score
70 min. (two 25-min. sections and one 20-min. section)	Number and operations; algebra and functions; geometry; statistics, probability, and data analysis	Five-choice multiple-choice questions and student-produced responses	200-800

The SAT includes expanded math topics, such as exponential growth, absolute value, and functional notation, and place greater emphasis on such other topics as linear functions, manipulations with exponents, and properties of tangent lines.

Important skills formerly measured in the quantitative comparison format, such as estimation and number sense, will continue to be measured through the multiple choice and student response (grid-in) questions.

Test Content:

TEST SECTIONS	QUESTIONS	TIME
WRITING SECTION:-		
MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION	49	35 min
ESSAY	1 TOPIC	25 min
CRITICAL READING SECTION:		
READING COMPREHENSION		25 mins
SENTENCE COMPLETION		25 mins
PARAGRAPH LENGTH CRITICAL READING		20 mins
MATHEMATICS SECTION:		
SECTION I		25 mins
SECTION II		25 mins
SECTION III		20 mins

Scoring

The SAT produces individual scores for each section of the test and an overall composite score that ranges from 200 - 800. Your scaled score also corresponds to a percentile ranking, which shows how your score compared to that of the entire applicant pool.

What is a good score? Perception varies among schools and the quality of their applicant pools. Many state universities (with excellent programs) consider a score in the low 600s to be highly competitive, while a more selective program would consider a composite score of 650 to be quite low. To determine your odds of success, check the stats for accepted applicants at each school that interests you. Your goal should be to exceed that number by a comfortable margin.

Also investigate how each school handles the scores once they receive them. If you take the SAT more than once, most schools will use the highest of your test scores to make their admission decision. Yet some schools simply average the scores and are suspicious of a wide variation in an applicant's performance. Our advice: study and prepare well and take the test once. Do your best the FIRST time.

General Strategies for the SAT

- 1) Be familiar with the types of questions in each section. Refresh your skills in basic grammar and mathematics. Practice on our test questions and sample exam until you are comfortable with every question type.
- 2) Know how long you have to complete each section and budget your time accordingly.
- 3) Don't waste time reading the instructions on the test day. We include the specific instructions for each question type on this site. Read them thoroughly here and make sure you understand them. This will save you several minutes on the actual test day.
- 4) Develop a strategy to attack the questions in each section according to their level of difficulty. Remember, each question (regardless of its difficulty) is worth one point. Learn to recognize and seek out the types of questions you are good at. Answer as many "easy" ones first, returning later to tackle more difficult, time-consuming math problems and reading passages.
- 5) Answer every question, even if you are clueless about how to approach it. In many cases, you are better off guessing than wasting a ton of time on a problem you aren't able to solve. The test questions will vary widely in their level of difficulty. Some questions will be extremely difficult for all students and should not consume a disproportionate amount of your time.
- 6) Keep track of time as you work on each section of the test. We will teach you many strategies for how to approach different types of test questions. Yet you must effectively manage your time during the test to get a chance to apply those strategies correctly to as many questions as possible. Practice, practice, practice! Take the sample exam under timed test conditions. Give yourself one full minute at the end of each section to quickly fill in answers for questions you didn't get to.
- 7) Be extremely careful with your answer grid. Make sure you record your answers properly and skip spaces properly if you jump around during the test. We recommend that you circle the correct answer to each question in your test booklet, in addition to recording it on your answer grid. Circle questions that you are skipping, so that you can find them easily later when you return to them. Take a minute at the end of each section to verify that you have recorded your all of your answers properly.
- 8) Don't try to cram a lot of studying into the last few days before the test. Your best bet is to prepare a few hours a day for several weeks before the exam and to relax (or try to relax) the day or so before the actual test.

9) Arrive at the test center a few minutes early with all of your essential supplies (photo ID card, admission ticket, sharpened #2 pencils, watch, comfortable clothing, snack). Avoid chatting about the test during the breaks: this usually just increases your self-doubt and your test-taking anxiety.

10) Few applicants know how they did on the test when they leave the test center. Most feel badly, but this is usually just burnout from the stress of the long day. Don't panic and cancel your score unless:

- a) You were seriously ill on the test day (and it affected your performance)
- b) You were seriously unprepared and plan to remedy that before taking the test again

Writing Tips

In a typical day, an admissions officer will read between 25 and 50 application essays from candidates around the world. What stands out and makes a positive impression? Contrary to popular opinion, it's not simply academic prowess. Indeed, many candidates with exceptional grades are rejected each year. For most competitive applicants, the key to admissions success is selling your unique (non-academic) strengths.

Before you write, consider your audience and their objective. Committee members are vibrant people with unique personalities and talents. Their goal is to select a class of diverse, passionate students who will best contribute to the class. The ultimate class roster will include talented athletes, musicians, scientists and poets. No two successful candidates are alike, nor are their essays. A "great essay" can be about football, a dance recital, a family vacation or an embarrassing moment. What's the common denominator? Your writing must reveal your true personality, whatever that may be. Show us who you are and what you will bring to our program. Show us the contribution that only *you* can make.

Are there specific guidelines to follow? Absolutely! We surveyed thirty admission officers on what they expect to see in college application essays. Here's what works:

1. **Answer the question that was asked.** Many candidates try to dodge tough questions, particularly those about ethical issues, personal weaknesses and failure. Yet the committee asks these questions for a *reason*. We want to understand how you respond to adversity and the specific insights you developed from those experiences. Answer the tough questions honestly and directly. Don't try to sell us the artificial "canned" response you *think* we want to hear.
2. **Write naturally, but concisely.** Use simple sentence structure and your normal everyday vocabulary. Don't waste time on fancy introductions; get to the point quickly and reinforce it with specific examples.
3. **Use excellent grammar and punctuation.** Use logical paragraph breaks to separate your thoughts and to make the essay easier to read. Proofread your work carefully before sending it in. Don't let simple carelessness ruin your chances.
4. **Show your real personality (let us get to know you).** Too many essays are long, boring theoretical pieces about politics, the economy or complex business issues. No matter how well-written or researched, they don't tell us a darn thing about the candidate. Anyone can write a rational, detached paper, but that's not what we are looking for. We want to get to know you and the unique contribution you will make to our school.
5. **Personalize your essay as much as possible.** Write about your own unique, funny, interesting experiences. Provide details to add color. Adopt a relaxed, conversational style.
6. **Use humor only if it works.** Few people can write humorous prose or recount funny experiences effectively. If you have this gift, by all means use it. Before sending us a "funny" essay, have several different people read your material to make sure it comes across well on paper. Avoid anything off-color or mean-spirited.
7. **Convey a positive message (avoid cynicism).** Many applicants choose to discuss a misfortune they have experienced and how it shaped their personality. Be very careful of your tone if you decide to write about a hard-luck story. Avoid the "victimization" perspective and focus on how you *overcame* the situation. Show us how the experience helped you to demonstrate your stamina, perseverance and intelligence. If written well, these essays show us that you can succeed in the face of terrible obstacles. If written badly, you may sound plaintive, self-righteous and bitter.
8. **Write about topics you are passionate about.** Nothing lifts an essay off the page more than genuine enthusiasm! Yet few candidates have the confidence to write about a passion if they feel it is silly or frivolous. Questions about your favorite hobby or childhood memory are designed to flesh out your non-academic side. Yes, we really want to know! Nothing is more precious than your unique memories about key people and experiences in your life. We've read magical

essays about eating ice cream and singing in the shower and absolutely dreadful ones about triglyceride synthesis. When choosing your topics, pick what genuinely excites you. Your enthusiasm will show in the final product.

9. **Use the active voice.** Nothing is more tedious than trying to read an essay written in the cold, detached passive voice. While popular with scientists who publish in technical journals, it is pretentious and verbose in everyday writing. Keep your verbs simple and active. What's the difference?

Active Voice: The cow jumped over the moon.

Passive Voice: The moon was jumped over by the cow.

Yes, it sounds that silly when *you* use it, too!

10. **Explain events whenever appropriate.** Many of your accomplishments are of interest to the committee because of why you tackled them, what you thought about them and what you learned. Tell us the reasoning behind your decision and how your life changed as a result of the experience.

11. **Be specific and focused.** Rather than listing several items or events, give a full description of just one. The more details you include, the more personal your essay will be.

12. **Proofread several times and get feedback from valued sources.** Explain to them what you hope to convey in your writing and ask whether you met your objectives. The true test of your writing isn't what you *intended* to say, but what the reader actually understands.

13. **Revise and polish until it is perfect.** Give yourself enough time to do the essays well. Successful applicants usually invest several hours considering each question, deciding the correct approach, constructing an outline and writing a first draft. You may have to write and revise multiple drafts before you are satisfied with your essay.

In addition, they advise all applicants to *avoid* the following common mistakes:

1. **Don't let anyone else tell you what to write.** Well-meaning parents and advisors often interfere in the writing process, sabotaging the candidate's chances. Use your own best judgement in choosing a topic and writing your essay. Don't let anyone else influence you. We read thousands of essays each year, and have developed a keen eye for authenticity.

2. **Don't oversell yourself or try too hard.** Many candidates manage to squeeze every accomplishment they've ever had into a single one-page essay. Others explain emphatically how much they "really, really" want to attend our school. Don't take such a desperate approach. Answer the questions to the best of your ability and be yourself.

3. **Don't rehash information that can be found elsewhere in the application.** We already know your grade point average, standardized test scores, academic awards and honors. Use your limited essay space to discuss experiences that aren't revealed anywhere else. Consider your essay to be an informal interview, your exclusive "one-on-one" time with the committee. Show us why we should accept you into our academic community.

4. **Don't write a scholarly or overly academic paper.** The essay is your opportunity to demonstrate your non-academic strengths, particularly your personality. Don't waste the opportunity to let us get to know the real you.

5. **Don't appear overly idealistic or preachy.** Don't use trite, tired themes for the focus of the essay. Be original. Each year, we receive hundreds of essays that discuss the horrors of nuclear weapons and the dangers of global warming. Sadly, they don't tell us anything we don't already know. If you choose to discuss a meaningful issue, do so in the context of your demonstrated commitment to change it, either through your career or volunteer work. Don't confuse passive idealism (or future intentions) with productive action. A demonstrated commitment to a cause is worth writing about; passive idealism is not.

6. **Don't try to explain blemishes on your record.** With rare exceptions, it is impossible to explain poor grades and test scores without sounding irresponsible or defensive. Neither will enhance your admissions chances. If you have a compelling excuse for an academic disappointment, place it in a separate addendum to your file, rather than in the body of an essay or personal statement.

7. **Don't use large, pretentious words.** Use the simplest possible language to explain your meaning precisely. Using three-dollar words to impress the committee usually backfires, as it comes across as presumptuous and arrogant.

8. **Don't be boring and safe; tell a real story!** A fresh and well-written essay will enhance your credentials and aid your application effort.

9. **Don't lie or exaggerate.** Applicants seldom realize how easy it is to detect lies and half-truths in admissions essays. Don't pretend to be someone you are not. After reading your file, committee members have an excellent "feel" for your character and can tell when a reported event or achievement isn't consistent with the rest of your history. Lying is a fatal mistake. A single misrepresentation on your application will lead us to doubt all of your other assertions.

10. **Don't be gimmicky.** Avoid using definitions to begin your essay. This crutch was extremely popular in the late 90's, but is now synonymous with sloppy writing. Avoid using cute or "meaningful" quotations, unless they perfectly fit the character and tone of your essay. Quotations are terrific if they are seldom-quoted and deeply relevant to your chosen topic. All too often, though, their usage is cliché and the resulting essay is unimaginative.

11. **Don't play games with the word limit.** Don't use a miniscule type size or invisible border to shrink an essay to the stipulated length. Except in extreme circumstances, your finished essay should adhere to the maximum word limit. In many cases, less is more. Convey your points quickly and efficiently; don't feel obligated to "fill" extra space.

From our experience, the biggest mistake applicants make is trying too hard. Most essays are long, boring laundry lists of achievements that are already presented elsewhere in the application. Ironically, unsuccessful candidates rarely reveal enough about themselves for the reader to get to know them. Rather than reveal their unique personality, many try to impress the committee with their youthful idealism and good intentions. They write a long, boring piece about the need to promote world peace or end hunger. Sadly, these preachy "Miss America"-type essays are rarely successful.

The essays of successful applicants will probably surprise you. They are seldom academic in nature, and may seem risky (or frivolous) to those who are diligently trying to put their best foot forward. That's why studying them is so valuable. They reveal the heart and soul of each writer and demonstrate what the candidate would add to the university. They were accepted because they caught the eye (and captured the heart) of a receptive admissions officer.

SAT contact details: www.collegeboard.com

Register online:

<https://ecl.collegeboard.com/account/login.jsp?applicationId=115&destinationpage=https%3A%2F%2Fnsat.collegeboard.com:443/satweb%2Flogin.jsp>

Registration by Mail

To register by mail, you need an *SAT Registration Booklet*, which is available at your school counselor's office. The Registration Form and return envelope are included in the *SAT Registration Booklet*.

Your completed registration form must be returned in the envelope provided with proper payment.

The *SAT Registration Booklet* contains test dates, registration deadlines, fees, instructions, test center codes, and other registration-related information.

Standby Testing

If you miss the late registration deadline, there's still a chance you can sometimes take the SAT as a standby. Test centers accept standbys on a first-come, first-serve basis **only** if they have enough space, testing materials, and staff—so there is no guarantee that you'll be admitted to the test. Read more about [Standby Testing](#).

If You're Absent

If you are absent on test day and you wish to test on another date, call Customer Service at (609) 771-7600 (TTY: 609 882-4118). If you do not wish to test on another date, your test and registration fees (including fees for services such as telephone re-registration) are nonrefundable. No reports will be sent.

The fee is \$20 to change your test, test date, or test center.

When you call, be ready to tell the customer service representative your registration number and test date, your social security number, and the credit card number and expiration date. If you do not want to change your test date and would like to request a refund for any additional score reports, Question-and-Answer Service, and Student Answer Service, call Customer Service at (609) 771-7600.

Test date:	Oct 8 2005	Nov 5 2005	Dec 3 2005	Jan 28 2006	Apr 1 2006	May 6 2006	Jun 3 2006
Regular registration deadline:	Sep 8 2005	Sep 30 2005	Oct 28 2005	Dec 22 2005	Feb 24 2006	Apr 3 2006	Apr 28 2006
Late registration deadline (\$21 fee), for domestic sites only:	Sep 14 2005	Oct 12 2005	Nov 9 2005	Jan 4 2006	Mar 8 2006	Apr 12 2006	May 10 2006

Contact details:

By Email or Telephone:

Please direct questions or feedback to SAT Program Customer Service by completing this [email inquiry form](#) or by calling (609) 771-7600, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 8:45 p.m. (Eastern Time). Summer hours (after June administration through Aug.): Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. (Eastern Time). Services for Students with Disabilities: (609) 771-7137

TTY (for students who are deaf or hard of hearing): (609) 882-4118

By Mail:

The College Board
SAT Program
P.O. Box 6200
Princeton, NJ, 08541-6200

For appearing in SAT in India, you can contact **United States Educational Foundation in India (USEFI)**:

Headquarters: 12 Hailey Road, New Delhi 110 001 India
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Regional Offices: Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai

For further information, contact info@fulbright-india.org

USEFI has the Headquarters in New Delhi, and three Regional Offices in Kolkata (formerly *Calcutta*), Chennai (formerly *Madras*), and Mumbai (formerly *Bombay*) The Mumbai Center is also a Sylvan Prometric Testing Center for ETS Tests.

New Delhi -- Headquarters

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(For Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and all Union Territories in the West)